

**A BRIEF HISTORY
OF
UPTON
NORTHAMPTON**



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PRINTED AND PRODUCED FOR QUINTON HOUSE SCHOOL
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the 1990s, the number of people in the UK who are employed in the public sector has increased from 10.5 million to 12.5 million (12% of the population) (Department of Health 2000).

There are a number of reasons for this increase. One of the main reasons is the increasing demand for health care services. The population is ageing, and there is a growing incidence of chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes. This has led to a corresponding increase in the number of people who are employed in the public sector to provide these services.

Another reason for the increase is the expansion of the public sector. The government has invested heavily in the health care system, and this has led to the creation of new jobs. For example, the number of hospital beds has increased from 1.5 million in 1990 to 2.5 million in 2000 (Department of Health 2000).

There are also a number of other factors that have contributed to the increase in public sector employment. For example, the government has introduced a number of policies that have encouraged people to work in the public sector. These include the introduction of the public sector pay award, which has made public sector jobs more attractive, and the introduction of the public sector pension scheme, which has provided a secure retirement income for public sector employees.

Despite the increase in public sector employment, there are still a number of challenges facing the public sector. One of the main challenges is the need to improve the efficiency of the public sector. The public sector is often criticised for being wasteful and inefficient, and there is a need to find ways to reduce costs and improve the quality of services. This is a complex task, and it will require a combination of measures, including the introduction of new technologies, the restructuring of the public sector, and the implementation of new management practices.

Another challenge facing the public sector is the need to attract and retain staff. The public sector often struggles to attract and retain the best talent, and this is a major concern for the government. There are a number of reasons for this, including the fact that the public sector often offers lower pay and less attractive working conditions than the private sector. The government needs to find ways to make public sector jobs more attractive, and this may involve increasing pay and improving working conditions.

There are also a number of other challenges facing the public sector. For example, the public sector is often faced with a need to provide services that are not profitable, and this can be a major challenge. The government needs to find ways to fund these services, and this may involve increasing taxes or borrowing money. This is a difficult task, and it will require a combination of measures, including the introduction of new taxes and the restructuring of the public sector.

Despite these challenges, the public sector remains an important part of the UK economy. It provides a wide range of services that are essential for the well-being of the population, and it is a major employer. The government needs to continue to invest in the public sector, and it needs to find ways to improve the efficiency of the public sector and to attract and retain staff. This is a complex task, and it will require a combination of measures, including the introduction of new technologies, the restructuring of the public sector, and the implementation of new management practices.

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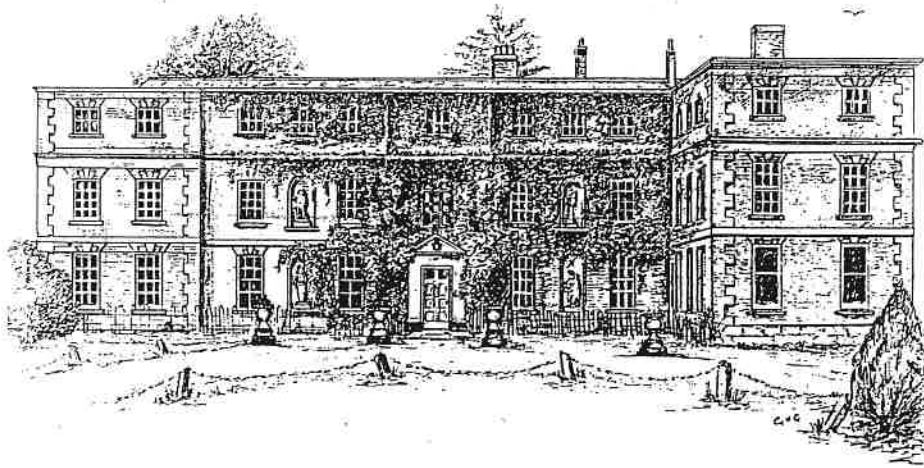
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INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND EDITION

Since I first produced this little book in 1991, much has happened in the educational world. I originally intended the information to be used for the projected National Curriculum Unit on local history and indeed I have used it in school for local studies. It is also useful to explain the significance of the School House system. The primary purpose of this new edition is still for use in School, despite the revision of the Government's plans. Many people who read the book are interested adults, so I decided to revise the information and adjust some of the prose. Moreover, some more information has come to light especially on the pictures in the ballroom and I have been able to use Mr Golby's recent booklet to find more on the later owners of the Hall, who were not of such interest for my original purposes. I have therefore decided to redesign and re-issue this booklet. There is, I am sure, much that a full time researcher might still add, but as a working teacher, time constraints restrict what I can achieve, so I hope any shortcomings will be forgiven.

INTRODUCTION TO THE 1991 EDITION

A first view of the Hall, park, church and grounds of Upton makes it obvious that this has been an important place of settlement for many years. There is a mill, a major road, a river and a canal, all set in rich farm land. Initial research confirms this impression of an historic site and certainly there is evidence of human occupation from very earliest times. Much can be discovered of the history of the inhabitants of the district and their connection with some of the more important historical events and ideas. Unfortunately for us, although perhaps fortunately for them, Upton people seem on the whole to have been a peaceful group, only occasionally involved in the great problems of their times, so discovering details of their lives can prove difficult, or even impossible. Certain facts can be ascertained, others can be deduced from the evidence available, but much is bound to remain obscure - especially detailed knowledge of personal lives. No-one seems to have kept a useful diary and most of the personal records have disappeared. This booklet is a summary of what I have been able to compile from the easily available sources.

THE EARLIEST ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDS

Evidence of habitation since the Stone Ages has been found in the immediate area. Worked flints and an axe have been discovered in eight locations, while a Bronze Age spearhead and part of a Belgic vessel, together with signs of enclosures, a ring ditch and mounds show continuing human habitation. There have been extensive finds from Roman times, like the potsherds and coins which show a possible connection with the large Roman settlement at Duston. Duston was the local centre for Roman life and industry and there is an excellent display about the area in the Northampton Museum in Guildhall Road. Northampton itself seems only to have become important in later times - the Anglo-Saxon centuries provide a greater number of sites in the town, but there is still no written evidence. At Upton there are foundations of an unusually large Saxon building west of the church, with a hearth, domestic debris and loom weights. These too are on display in the Museum. The supposition is that the building was a weaving shed. Recent excavations in the former walled garden before the construction of the new sports field revealed walls, ditches and some Saxon pottery, with the suggestion that the site might have been a kiln or a bakery. The remains of the deserted village to the south-east of the Hall may date back to Saxon times as the village is recorded in Domesday Book in 1086 and possibly the Hall itself has Saxon origins, but this can only be speculation.



UPTON - The Deserted Village

UPTON AND THE DOMESDAY SURVEY

William the Conqueror's national survey is complete for this part of England and so Upton (Optone) is recorded. We are by no means sure what the King intended to do with the information gathered, as he died his very nasty death before the full returns were complete, but the entry is not very satisfactory for our purposes in discovering more about the lives of the inhabitants.

Rex ten⁷ OPTONE . Ibi sunt . ii^x . hidæ . Tra . ē . x . car⁷ . In dñio . ē una .
7 x . uilfi 7 x . bord hnt . v . car⁷ . Ibi molin⁷ de . xii . fol 7 viii . den⁷ .
7 vi . ac⁷ pti .

[in NOBOTTLE Hundred]

- 19 UPTON. 2 hides. Land for 10 ploughs. In lordship 1.
10 villagers and 10 smallholders have 5 ploughs.
A mill at 12s 8d; meadow, 6 acres.

As you can see from the entry, the survey seems only to have been concerned with property values and the work force, so most historians conclude that the results were to be used for taxation, or for numbers of men available for military service. We can tell that Upton was fairly wealthy with a mill and five ploughs, compared with other local villages. . Not recorded is the name of the Saxon owner or anything about the buildings. The whole area became part of the King's own land in 1066 and only passed out of royal hands in 1189. There is a copy of the local volume of the Domesday Book with the Northampton entries in the school library

MEDIEVAL UPTON

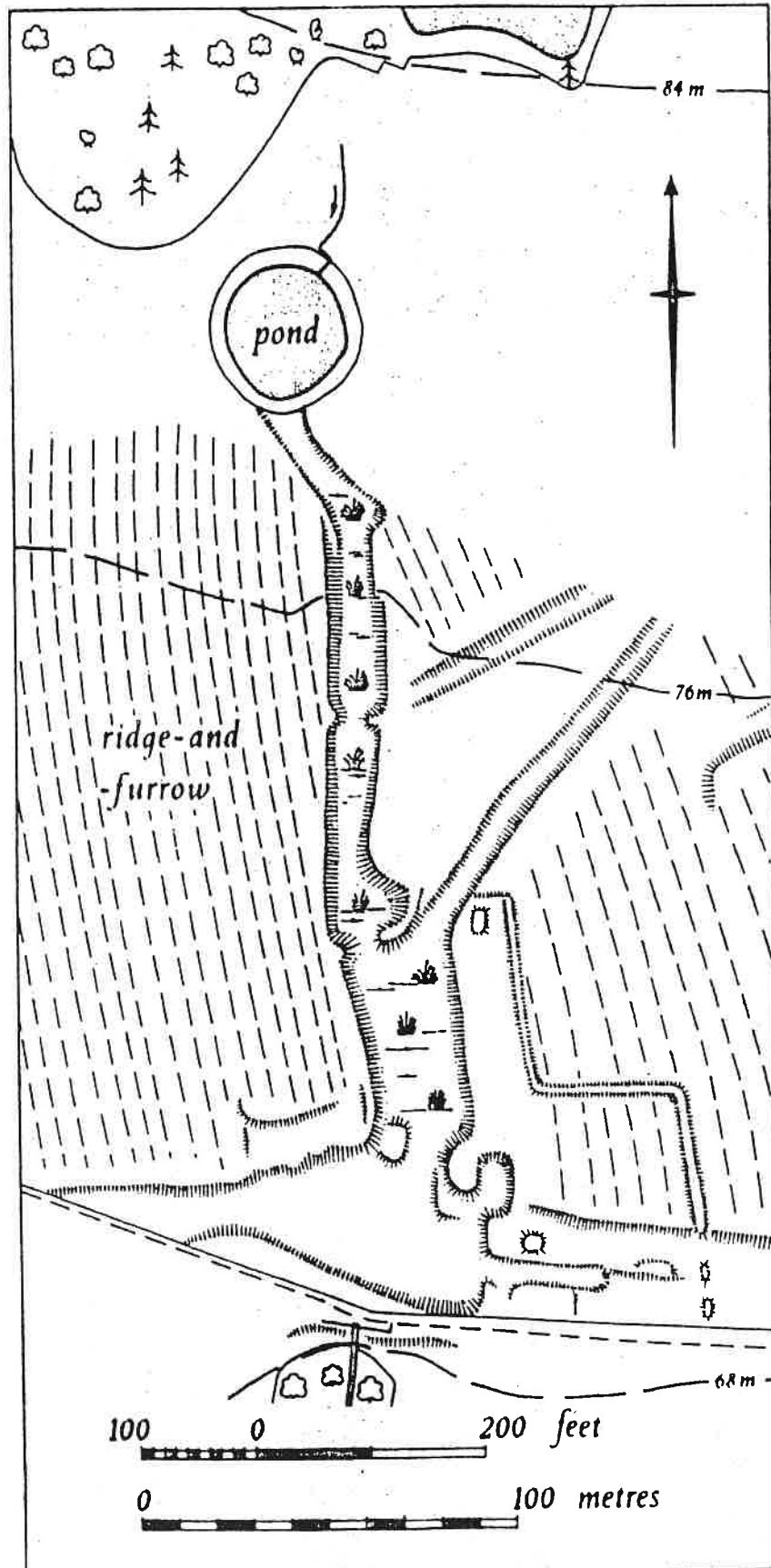
After 1066 we begin to get some written evidence to add to the archaeology. Archaeology provides information on the remains of ridge and furrow cultivation, resulting from centuries of ploughing field strips in the same direction to create drainage mounds, the remains of the deserted village which was certainly occupied in the Middle Ages and the traces of the fish ponds often created by villagers or their lords to provide not only water reserves, but also fresh fish. At that time the Catholic Church forbade the eating of meat on Fridays, as well as on many other days in Lent and Advent, so fish was a valuable addition to the monotonous diet. Ducks and water fowl were also obviously fish as they swam on water!

The written evidence, limited though it is, confirms the impression of a prosperous village unit under its lord. I have used the research done so meticulously in the early 19th century by George Baker, who studied the various Charters and Court records in the original Clerk's Latin (the extract from the Domesday Survey on page 8 is an example of Clerk's Latin and you can see that it was a form of shorthand).

The manor in the Middle Ages was the whole of the land and house held by a feudal tenant and, as stated earlier, William kept most of Northamptonshire for himself and his family. The resistance of the Saxon hero, Hereward the Wake who was the former Saxon nobleman of Northamptonshire, meant that there was a need for a strong hand in this area and William entrusted it to his niece, Judith, who married the Saxon Earl of Northampton, Waltheof. He was executed on 1076 for treason, showing that William the Conqueror did not have an "easy ride" in overcoming the Saxons. The lands passed to her daughter, Maud, who married Simon de Senlis, one of William's chief followers. Northampton itself benefited largely from the Senlis family, but there is no record of them at Upton.

However the manor passed out of royal hands in 1189, a year when Richard the Lion Heart was raising money for the Third Crusade. Many towns, including Northampton, date their first charters from 1189 and the suspicion is that the King was selling privileges and land to pay for his foreign responsibilities.

Robert Fitzsewin was granted the manor "for services" although what they were is not recorded, but land grants were often made to repay royal debts. It passed through the female line to the Chauncey family but the land seems to have been sub-divided between tenants. The Abbot of St James obtained the mill and some meadowland in



Plan of the fish ponds

the reign of Henry III. A mill was a valuable possession as all farmers had to pay to have their corn ground and this may be the origin of the local belief that the Hall had monastic connections.

There were various Law Court appearances noted. There are few other records, but all legal records were kept and are still available so that one might get the impression that Englishmen were very fond of going to law and were often in trouble with the authorities. Historians, however, have to study those records that still exist.

Perhaps the most interesting case occurred in 1329 in the reign of Edward III. The then lord, Nicholas de Chauneas, or Chaunceux, was summoned to explain what right he had to exact tolls on the fish and salt passing through the manor, presumably along that part of the King's Highway that was later to become the A45. He was also asked whether he kept "pillory and tumbrel" to punish offenders within his jurisdiction, which would have implied the expense of catching, trying and punishing criminals. It seems he was only fining criminals instead of using the traditional punishments.

It appears that Nicholas was charging 1d for each cart load of fish, which we hope were salted or smoked, with a farthing for each horse load and a farthing for a bushel of salt. He must have been a shrewd early businessman as salt was essential at a time when fresh meat was unknown from September till June for all but the very rich. Fish was a valuable contribution to the diet and was carried long distances to market.

The Weedon Road was a main highway to and from Northampton, an important provincial town with its Royal castle, and Nicholas might have been making a very good profit. The verdict seemed to be going against him until the ancient system of getting a jury of twelve local men to swear to the truth was used. They declared that his activities were of "ancient lineage" and said the family had improved the roads and so had a right to the tolls. Roads at the time were often impassable, so this would be a valuable local service. Nicholas was fined half a mark, but he kept his lands. What happened about the tolls is unknown, but probably he would not have been able to collect them afterwards. By a strange coincidence, this Nicholas' daughter married a Richard Knightley who died in 1346, seventy years before the Knightleys from Staffordshire bought the property. Perhaps one could guess that it was this marriage that brought the manor to their attention.

There is no evidence about the life of the villagers in the Middle Ages. From the remains already mentioned it seems to have been quite prosperous, with a mill worth

forty shillings. In an inventory of 1477 twenty four houses are recorded which is almost the equivalent of the Domesday entry and corresponds with the mounds of the "lost" village (see the reconstruction below). By that time the Knightleys had already started their aggressive depopulation for sheep enclosures at their bigger manor at Fawsley. This struggle is well documented as the tenants resisted through the Courts, but what happened at Upton is obscure. Perhaps the family extended their policy to Upton, but parish records are not available till 1594 because St Michael's church was originally a Chapel of Ease of St Peter's in Northampton and would be treated as part of that parish. Certainly the village declined. By 1700 there were only eleven houses and at the first census of 1801 there were only four.

The village may have died a natural death - of disease such as the Black Death of 1348-9 or its successors, or the workers might have been attracted into Northampton. The existence of a large town nearby may have allowed the workers to leave without protest. We can only guess at the reasons for the disappearance of the houses, and it may even have been as late as the Samwell creation of the Park in the 18th century.

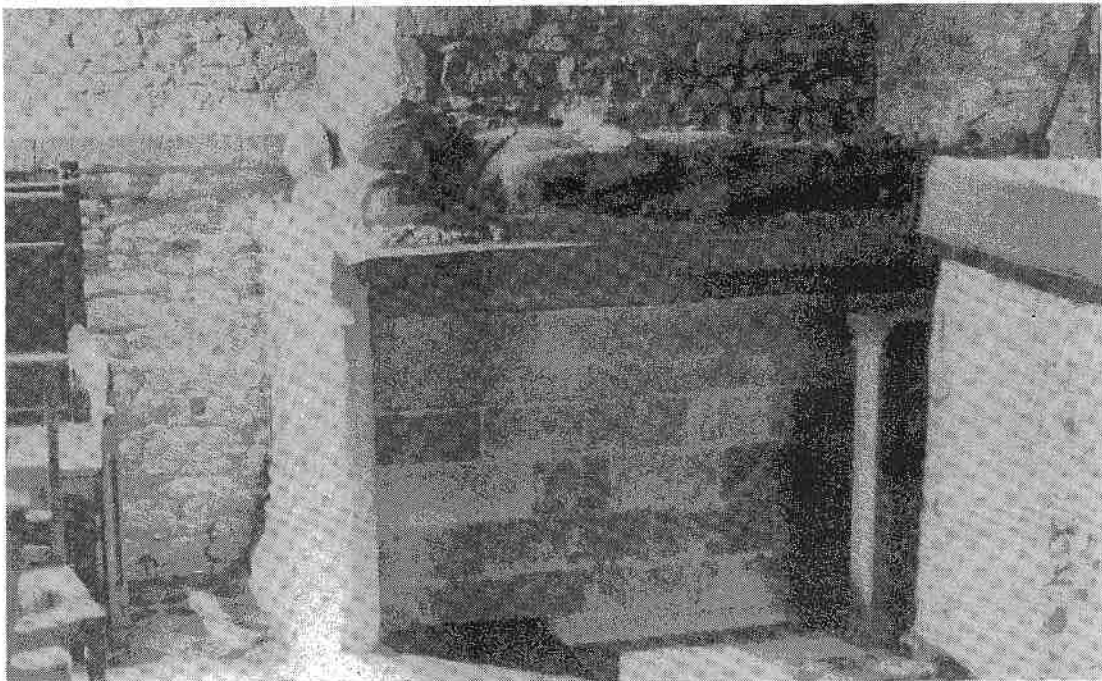


An artist's impression of the Medieval village

THE KNIGHTLEYS AT UPTON

The Knightleys have a very ancient lineage and appear to have come from the Knightleys of Staffordshire. Their first connection with Upton was the marriage of Ellen, daughter of Nicholas Chaunceux, to Richard Knightley, but the real connection starts with the Richard Knightley of Gnowshall in Staffordshire who purchased Upton, Fawsley and Hellidon between 1416 and 1419. The intention seems to have been to enclose the land for sheep grazing, the major profitable industry at the time. Fawsley village was deliberately cleared by raising rents and feudal dues and then evicting for non-payment. The villagers protested vigorously (see R.Muir, "The Lost Villages of Britain"). By 1547, Fawsley had 2,500 sheep, although there were only seven tax payers in 1524, two of them Knightleys. They were also clearing arable land for sheep pasture. There is no record of such clearances at Upton, but the village does seem to have largely declined under the Knightleys, so it seems reasonable to suppose the same process may have been carried out. By 1523 only nine tax payers were listed. There is no record of legal protest, so the population may have moved peacefully. The family had several marriage connections with the Spencer family, then of Wormleighton and later of Althorp.

The Fawsley manor was the main Knightley residence, but a Richard Knightley was living at Upton early in Tudor times while his father (another Richard) lived at Fawsley. The Upton Richard married Jane Spencer of Althorp and they are both buried in St Michael's Church in the handsome chest tomb now on the left of the altar.



The Knightley chest tomb in St Michael's

It seems likely that it was this Sir Richard who was responsible for the first rebuilding of the Hall. The house at Fawsley was built by Sir Edmund Knightley, Sir Richard's brother and heir, so they were possibly building at the same time.

Despite the later Samwell reconstruction, Nicholas Pevsner describes the Ballroom as late medieval, because of the roof timbers.

A dendrochronological survey carried out in 1986 shows the roof timbers to be of chestnut and dating from 1507 (quoted by A. Tolemen in "Fawsley Hall - Genesis, Decline and Renaissance").

The roof show signs of alteration and some parts may be earlier. Little otherwise is recognisable as remains of the Tudor house although the buildings at the rear of the Hall are obviously older than the Samwell alterations.



A view of the roof structure

Sir Richard had no male children, so the property descended to his brother, Edmund. He died in 1542 so he only owned Upton for five years and continued to live at Fawsley. He was an important man in the district, being Sargent-at-law for the County and one of the Commissioners sent out by Henry VIII for the visitation of the monasteries in 1535 which preceded their closure. He made a splendid marriage to Ursula, co-heir to the Earl of Oxford and his sister married William Spencer of Althorp. William seems to have been very aggressive and the brothers-in-law had frequent quarrels. At one point Edmund petitioned the King over fighting between them and their followers. Edmund may have enjoyed royal favour, but that did not stop

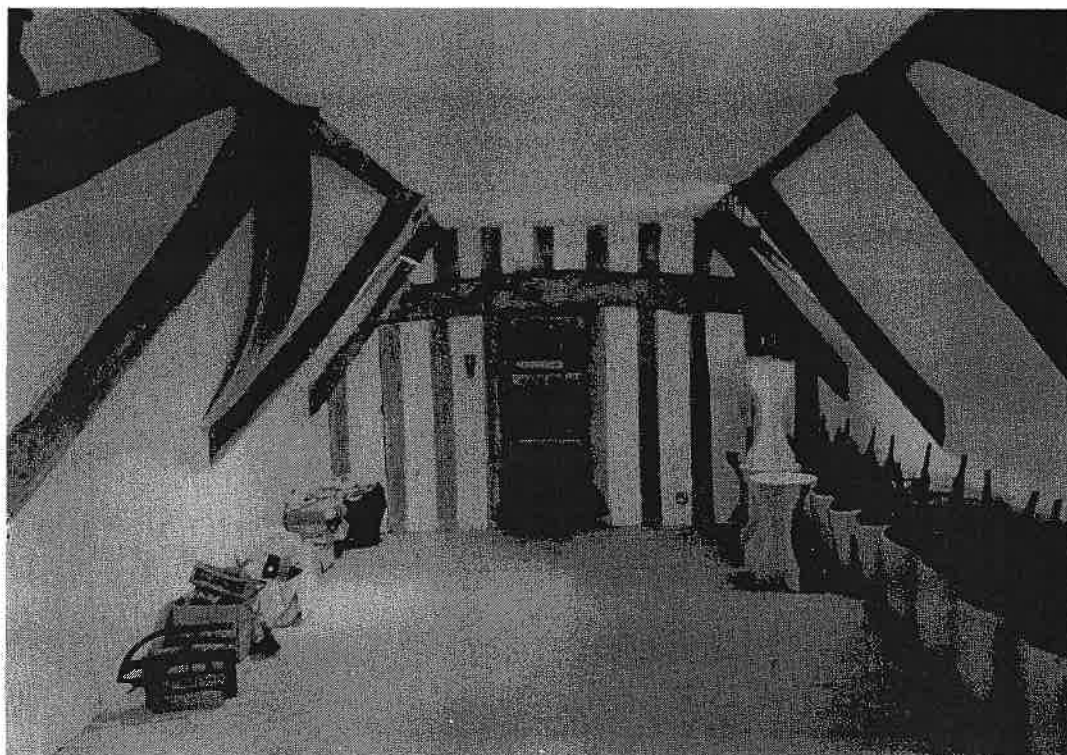
the King putting him in the Fleet prison when he dared to dispute the King's right to the Spencer property after William's death. Edmund also had no living male heir, so at his death he was succeeded by a third brother, Valentine who in turn died in 1566.

Valentine did have a son, another Sir Richard, and he became the only really famous Knightley connected with Upton, although he too lived at Fawsley. This Sir Richard was born in 1533 and died in 1615 and so lived through all the religious and political changes of that turbulent century. By his two wives he had a total of fourteen children "who did much to impoverish their father's great estate which had been worth £ 13,000 a year" (Baker), but his claim to fame was his involvement with the Puritan movement and with the Marprelate Tracts and illegal presses. "Martin Marprelate" was the name given to the author or authors of a series of pamphlets containing Puritan attacks on the Church of England and its bishops in the reign of Elizabeth. The printing presses were unlicensed and so the whole endeavour was highly illegal and the portable presses had to be moved frequently and hidden in "safe houses".

Sir Richard had led a "gay life" as a young man, but later he became a rigid Puritan. In 1588, the year of the Armada, when all Protestants were in fear of a Catholic triumph, the press was hidden at Fawsley and then at another Knightley house at Norton. Afterwards it was discovered in Manchester and confessions of the captured Puritans betrayed Sir Richard. He was arrested and accused of "maintaining seditious persons books and libels", which would carry the death penalty. However, Archbishop Whitgift, the chief person attacked in the Tracts, sought and obtained his release from the Queen who always preferred the softer option of fining. This did not stop his Puritan activities and in 1605 he signed the Northampton Petition to James 1 against the expulsion of Puritan clergy from Northamptonshire parishes after the Hampton Court Conference. He was rebuked and fined £10,000. This last fine, combined with the extravagance of his two eldest sons, especially Valentine, led to serious financial embarrassment and the property had to be split up and re-entailed with the agreement of Valentine. In 1591 Sir Valentine received Upton as part of his share. He then sold this estate and that at Hellidon in 1600, while his father was still alive. William Samwell bought the house and ground for the then enormous sum of £7366 13s and the Knightley connection ended.

It is interesting to note that most of the Catholic plotters against James I in the Gunpowder Plot of the same year came from Northamptonshire. Both extremes of religious feeling seem to have been well represented here.

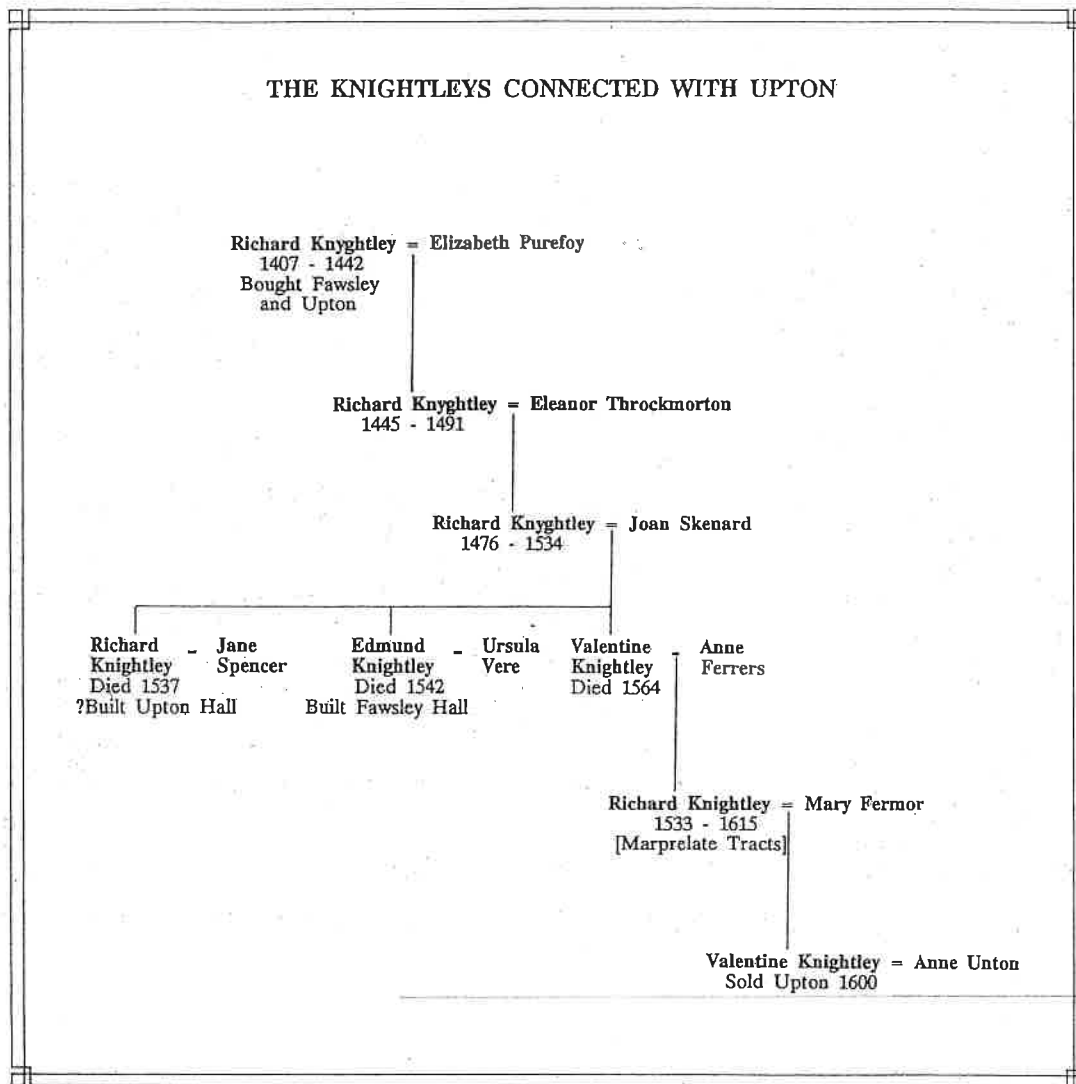
These Puritan convictions of the Knightleys render unlikely the local legends of dispossessed monks hiding in the so-called "Monks' Room" in the old Hall, especially as modern research shows that the monks were all provided for by the King, either by pensions or employment. Many of them departed to their other Houses abroad. A few were executed for treason for defying the King, but their sufferings have been much exaggerated.



The "Monks' Room"

There seems little evidence about which of the Knightleys lived at Upton after the first Sir Richard although his widow, Jane, remarried in 1543 to Sir Robert Stafford. He is recorded in a law suit against Sir John Spencer in 1561 and was dead by 1576. He possibly lived on in the house with his daughters, but Upton was only one of many Knightley houses. They owned others at Plumpton, Badby, Newnham, Everdon, Hellidon, Alderton, Stroke Bruerne, Moreton Pinkney, Middleton Cheney, and Little Harrowden as well as other estates in Staffordshire, Buckinghamshire and Warwickshire. There were numerous family members to use all these residences.

Below is a simplified family tree for the period they owned Upton. A fuller one, which is taken from Baker, is available at the school.



THE SAMWELLS AT UPTON



Upton Hall - the entrance front

The Samwell family bought Upton in 1600 and the house was in continuous occupation by the family till 1831 or 1841, when disputed succession gave rise to arguments. The bankrupt estate was finally split up in 1881 when the Hall was sold to Mr George Turner from Northampton.

The present house owes much to the Samwell rebuilding, especially that of the second baronet, Sir Thomas Samwell and his second wife, Mary Clarke. He lived between 1687 and 1757 so we owe the Georgian elegance of the public rooms to them.

The Samwell family seems to have sprung originally from Cornwall. A Richard Samwell, esquire, moved to Cottesford in Oxfordshire and then to Northampton in the 16th century and his son, Francis, acquired property in Rothersthorpe and married Mary Bill. She was a sister to the Lord Almoner to Queen Elizabeth and the Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, so Francis must have been quite wealthy to attract such a match. He is recorded as Auditor to Henry VIII and as such was a royal financial officer, as was his son, Sir William Samwell. How they became so wealthy is not known, but many of the royal officers did profit from their offices. We know that Sir Francis bought part of the grounds of St James' Abbey after the Dissolution and the

family obviously moved in the best circles. It was Sir William who bought the Upton estate from the Knightleys, paying a very good price. He himself became Sheriff of the County and his six sisters made respectable marriages to country gentlemen. The family seems to have remained prosperous, despite their numerous children, but the source of their money is a mystery, although the family tree does reveal a tendency to marry heiresses. Sir Thomas Samwell, the third baronet, seems to have been in business as a wine importer and later members of the family were prominent in the Army, but otherwise they seemed to have lived on inherited wealth.

Sir William was succeeded by his son, Sir Richard. He became Sheriff of Northampton and a prominent Puritan, supporting the Parliamentary side in the Civil War and was a vigorous pursuer of Royalists whose property was forfeit. There is a sad story of his pursuit of the Vicar of Rothersthorpe whose religious views were not acceptable. The poor man was arrested, tithes were forbidden to him and he died in jail. His wife and seven children were left destitute. Sir Richard acquired more estates in Gayton and he died in 1668. His eldest son had predeceased him, but he (another Richard) had already married Frances, co-heir of Viscount Wenman of Tuam in Ireland. She and her two sisters have their full length portraits hanging in the Ballroom. Their son, the first Sir Thomas, was created baronet in 1675, possibly by purchase from Charles II who was always short of money. He became MP for Northampton and managed to marry two heiresses, Elizabeth Goodley and Anne Godschalk. After many failures, his second wife managed to produce a son who survived to become the 2nd baronet.

This Sir Thomas was born in 1687, only six years before his father's death and so he was the Samwell who owned Upton for the longest period. He also had two wives, Millicent, an heiress, and Mary Clarke, a widow. (Both their portraits hang in the Ballroom). Mary and Thomas were responsible for the extensive rebuilding of the Hall which is why their initials are intertwined over the Ballroom door and Mary's coat of arms with scallop shells is visible in many places. They are buried in St Michael's Church and both their hatchments are displayed in the church (see the section on the Church). Sir Thomas became MP for Coventry and the only excitement caused by public matters during his lifetime was the Jacobite rebellion of Bonnie Prince Charlie in 1745. The Prince and his Scottish army invaded England and got as far as Derby and so there was felt to be a serious threat to the Midlands at a time when a large Royal standing army was not in existence. Sir Thomas' death plaque in the church records that he and his two sons, Thomas and Wenman, accepted commissions in the Earl of Halifax's regiment, but they did not after all have to fight as the Scots turned back

north to face their bloody defeat at Culloden Moor. The plaque states that "he preferred retirement to the splendour of the Court".

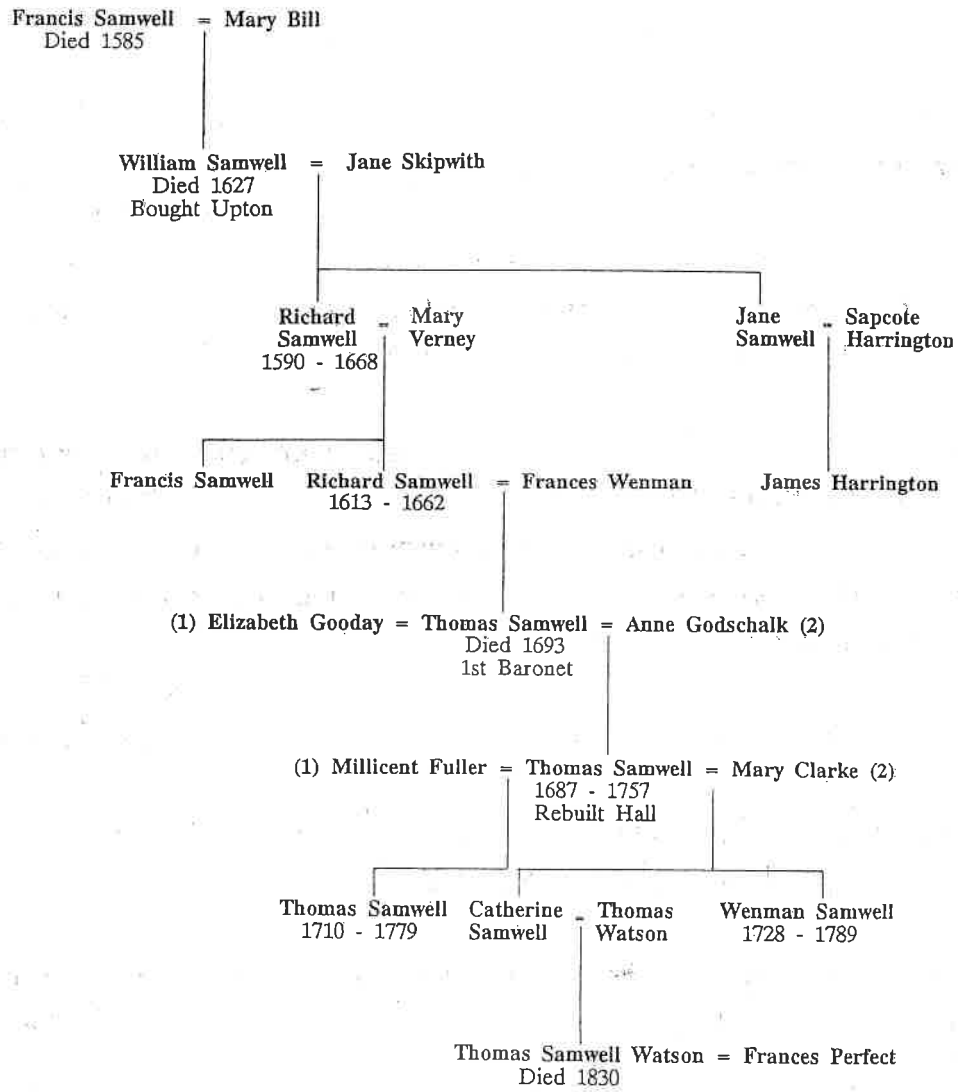
The third baronet, yet another Sir Thomas, was Millicent's son, but he died without getting married, so he was succeeded by his step-brother Sir Wenman, son of Mary Clarke. He and his wife, Elizabeth, also had no children so the property descended through the female line and the baronetcy was extinguished. Thomas Watson was the son of Sir Wenman's sister and he adopted the name of Samwell by Act of Parliament in 1790 and acquired an entitlement to the Samwell coat of arms. He was a distinguished man locally, being Lieutenant Colonel of the Northamptonshire Militia, having already served overseas in America during the War of Independence and in the West Indies where Britain was extending her Empire. As he also died without children, his brother, Wenman Langham Watson Samwell succeeded in 1831, but he died in 1841. Three girls were the heiresses, Charlotta, Clarissa, and Frances, daughters of Charlotta Tinley, sister of Thomas and Wenman Watson Samwell.

Much was sold then and the property was disputed until bankruptcy forced it to be split up. In 1874 the northern part was sold to provide land for the "lunatic asylum" at St Crispin's and the rest of the estate was bought by a Northampton businessman, Mr George Turner. (There is a little more information about owners of the Hall after the Samwells at the end of the book.)

The Samwells were a peaceful family and most of their personal papers seem to have disappeared with the house clearance. It is very difficult to find much personal detail even for this late date, although there are some records of Thomas Samwell Watson in the Northampton Militia Records.

Opposite is a simplified family tree taken from Baker. The full one is available in the School.

THE SAMWELLS OF UPTON



SIR JAMES HARRINGTON

The only really famous Samwell family member was Sir James Harrington, leader of the Harringtonian Reform Movement, writer of "Oceana" and close friend of Charles I. He was also an associate of the Parliamentary leaders in the Civil War. This ability to be both friend and enemy to both sides in that bitter dispute, and yet still die in his bed, could be regarded as an achievement in itself.

Harrington was born in 1611, the son of Sir Sapcote Harrington of Milton Malsor and of Jane Samwell, the sister of Sir Richard. She appears to have returned to Upton because he was actually born in the Hall here although he spent the rest of his youth in Milton Malsor. The Harringtons were an ancient family, with estates mainly in Rutland, and one of his cousins, Sir John Harrington, was a godson of Queen Elizabeth, a poet and the inventor of the first flush toilet. Unfortunately he did not invent the sewerage system to go with it, so the project which might have saved much disease and death was not a success.



*James Harrington, author of Oceana.
Portrait by Sir Godfrey Kneller, in the possession of the Trustees of the British Museum.*

James Harrington himself was one of eight children and it was his sister who supplied much material to Toland, his biographer. He entered Trinity College, Oxford, but left before taking a degree, as was the common habit of gentlemen. A period of travel followed and he seems to have covered most of Europe. He joined an English volunteer regiment to fight in the Netherlands in support of the Protestant revolt against the Catholic King of Spain. England herself did not take part in the Wars of Religion which raged on the continent till 1660 as the Stuarts had neither the money or inclination to become involved, but young men did offer themselves in the cause. There is, however, no evidence that he did actually fight. In the course of these adventures he did come to know many of the European royalty, especially Elizabeth, daughter of James I and sister of his later great friend, Charles I. She and her husband had lost their throne in Germany to the Catholics and wandered round the Courts of Europe. Sir James learned several languages, hobnobbed with princes and came to take a lively interest in politics of the republican sort. He also conceived a hatred of Catholicism

which he saw as tyrannical and at the root of the destructive Wars. When visiting Rome, however, he kissed the Pope's toe as was the expected custom

Once home, James helped to establish his brothers and sisters in life as his father had died but soon became involved, as all men in his position in life must, in the quarrel between King Charles I and his Parliaments. As a great personal friend of the King, he went with him on his ill-fated attempt to defeat the Scots in the Bishops' War of 1639, which eventually led to the Civil War in England. His political sympathies lay more with Parliament, as did those of his cousin, Sir Richard Samwell at Upton. His awkward position shows the difficulty of divided loyalties which faced many wealthy men and split their families. To try to avoid the conflict Sir James retired from public life until 1647, but after the end of the war he tried to persuade the Commissioners of Parliament to compromise with the King.

He became Groom of the King's Bedchamber, a post of great intimacy, and was with Charles in his imprisonment at Holdenby Hall, Carisbrooke Castle and Hurst Castle, where he was dismissed after a quarrel with the Governor about the rights and wrongs of the establishment of Puritanism in England. He rejoined Charles on his removal to Windsor before his trial, but was himself imprisoned for refusing to promise not to help the King escape. Briefly he was allowed to return to the King and actually witnessed the execution in 1649.

Throughout all this excitement, Harrington had been developing his ideas of Republicanism, writing his most famous work, "Oceana", by 1656. The Civil War gave rise to many such movements and proposals for the better ordering of society. After 1653, Oliver Cromwell was well in command and by an order of 1655 "against Scandalous Books and Pamphlets and for the Regulation of Printing" Harrington's book could not be published. The story goes that he obtained permission to print through Lady Claypole, Cromwell's favourite daughter. Sir James playfully pretended to kidnap her little daughter, saying that Cromwell had kidnapped his own child, the book. In fact "Oceana" was published in 1656 and dedicated to Cromwell. The work became the "text book" of the Harringtonians, one of the many idealistic groups and societies which sprang up out of the post-war period. The book is a political allegory about a fictitious land of Oceana where all the laws are the best possible to lead the people towards public liberty. This was an implied attack on Cromwell's situation of almost absolute and monarchical power given him by the Instrument of Government after the failure of the Commonwealth.

Cromwell died in 1658 and in 1659 Harrington formed a society known as 'Rota', a debating society that met at Miles' Coffee House, Westminster, to discuss all the novel political ideas of the day. They proposed a new Republican form of government. Surprisingly he was safe under the rule of the army which followed Cromwell's death, only to be arrested by the restored King, Charles II, in 1661 and sent to the Tower on suspicion of treason. The penalty for this offence would have been hanging, drawing and quartering, but he was not brought to trial.

His sisters applied for a writ of Habeas Corpus, under an ancient law which demanded that the authorities either charged a prisoner and tried him for the offence, or released him. Instead, fearful perhaps of trying such a well known and well connected figure, the authorities smuggled him out of London to the Island of St Nicholas near Plymouth. His health broke down and he started to suffer from mental problems, so eventually he was released to live in Plymouth. Rather late in life he married Katherine Durrell, who had rejected him "in his bloom of youth and beauty", but his health further deteriorated and he suffered from an unspecified "painful disease". In 1677 he suffered a stroke and died soon after at the age of 66 (not "at the ripe age of 116" as given in Russell Smith's account).

We do not know if or when he revisited Upton after his birth, but a plaque to his memory was placed in St Michael's by Wenman Langham Watson in 1810 and can still be seen there.

JAMES HARRINGTON,

ESQ^r

SON OF S^r SAPIOTES HARRINGTON
OF EXTON RUTLAND & MILTON IN
THE COUNTY OF NORTHAMPTON KN^t
& JANE HIS WIFE, DAU^r OF S^r WILLIAM
SAMWELL OF UPTON KN^t BY HIS WIFE
JANE & DAU^r OF S^r HENRY SKIPWITH OF KEY-
THORPE LEICESTERSHIRE & NEPHEW TO JOHN
LORD HARRINGTON OF EXTON.

HE WAS BORN AT UPTON JAN^y 1611 MAR^d THE
DAU^r OF S^r MARMADUKE DORREL, DIED AT WEST-
MINSTER 11 SEP^r 1677 AGED 66 AND LIES BURIED
IN ST. MARGARET'S CHURCH WESTMINSTER, NEXT TO
S^r WALTER RALEIGH.

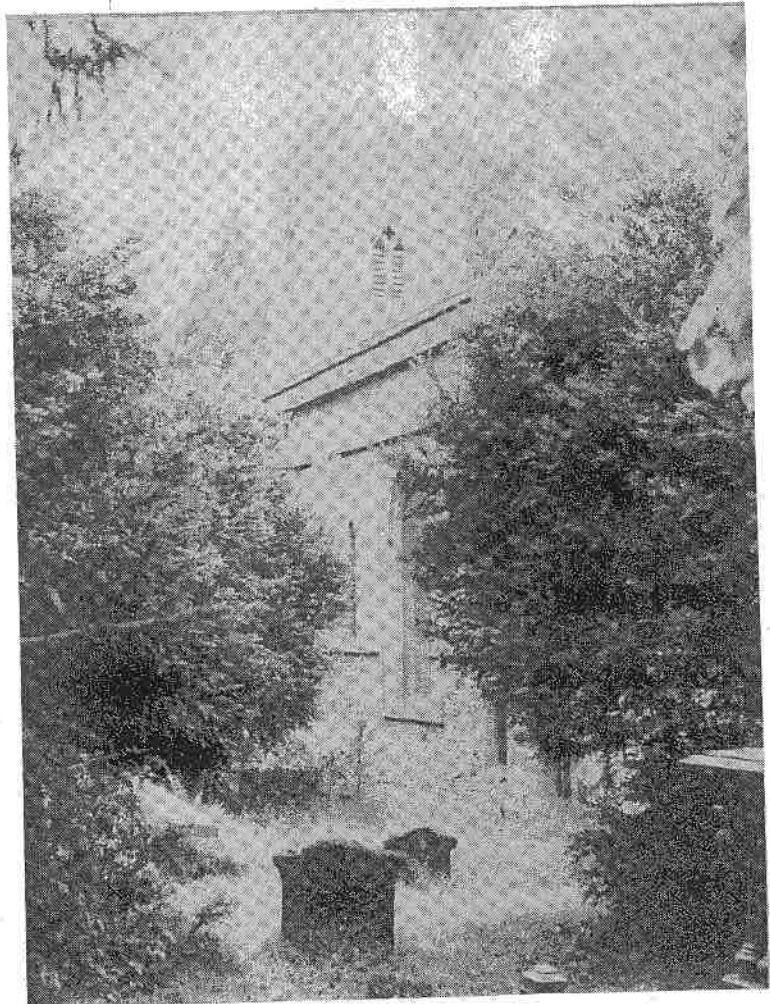
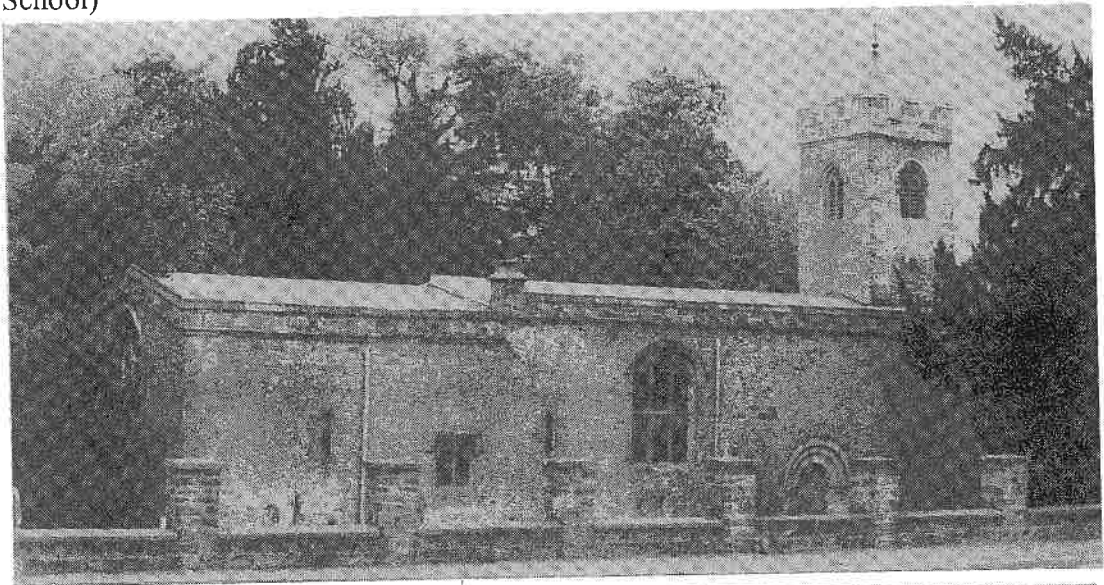
HE WAS ENDOWED WITH GREAT QUICKNESS OF WIT,
& A MOST FACETIOUS TEMPER, REMARKABLE FOR
HIS LIBERALITY & COMPASSIONATE NATURE.
IN 1629 HE WAS ENTERED A GENTLEMAN COMMONER
OF TRINITY COLLEGE OXFORD, AND WAS PUPIL UNDER
THE GREAT DR. CHILLINGWORTH, BEING MASTER
OF MOST LANGUAGES. HE AFTERWARDS VISITED
FOREIGN COURTS, WHEN HE RECEIVED EXTRA-
ORDINARY ATTENTION FROM THE QUEEN OF BO-
HEMIA, DURING HER RESIDENCE AT THE HAGUE.
HE WAS GROOM OF THE BED-CHAMBER TO KING
CHARLES THE FIRST WHEN THAT MONARCH WAS
CONFINED AT HOLDENBY HOUSE IN THIS COUNTY,
WHO IN CONSIDERATION OF HIS FRIENDSHIP
FOR HIM, GAVE HIM A TOKEN OF ROYAL FAVOR
WHEN ON THE SCAFFOLD. HE WAS AUTHOR
OF THE OCEANÆ & OTHER EXCELLENT
WORKS. TO HAND DOWN TO POSTERITY
SO EMINENT A PERSON, THIS TABLET
WAS ERECTED BY HIS RELATIVE
WENMAN LANGHAM WATSON ESQ^r

1810.

The oval tablet in the Church

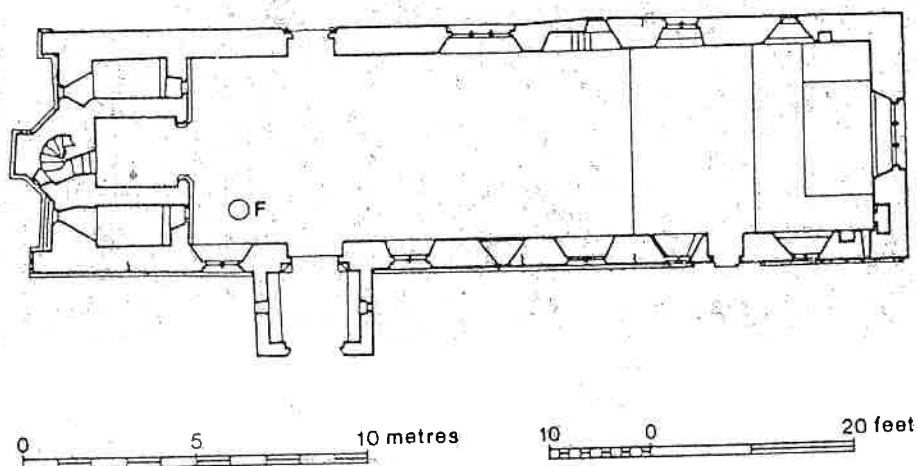
THE CHURCH OF ST MICHAEL

The best description of the building and history of the church is on pages 403-407 of the Royal Commission on Ancient Monuments Report. (Copies are available at the School)



Two views of St Michael's Church

As with most churches St Michael's has developed over the centuries. The first explicit reference shows that it was a Chapel of Ease which belonged to St Peter's, Northampton and not to the nearer St James' Abbey. There is no reference to a building before Robert Fitzsewin was granted the estate by Richard I. The report suggests that he rebuilt the church in its present form between 1158 and 1189. The Tower was added later, as the stair turret is not bonded to the Tower. Pevsner suggests this addition was 14th century. The porch was another addition and bears the date 1594, only six years before the sale by the Knightleys to the Samwells. The church was fully restored in 1892-3 as were so many in Victorian times.



The plan of the Church

The Report suggests that the Gothic arch set up in the gardens beside the Hall was taken from the church at that time, although that cannot be certain. There are suggestions that the arch was brought from elsewhere, possibly from the Samwell house in Oxfordshire.

Mr Golby's recent book has more detail about various developments in the church and some interesting documents arising from the running of the church, as well as a description of its interior.

The interior of the church has some interesting remains of the Knightley and Samwell families. Most imposing is the chest tomb of Sir Richard Knightley and his wife, Jane, possibly the builders of the Tudor Hall (See the picture on page 13). This has been much damaged, partly by its move from the right side of the altar, but possibly also by time or "vandals" in the shape of church restorers, or by the deliberate actions of the Cromwellian forces in the Civil War as some local opinion believes. Sir Richard is shown in plate armour with his helm, while his lady is richly dressed with flowing hair.

Other tablets around the walls recall the Samwells and later members of the parish and there is the commemorative plaque to James Harrington, the wording of which is given on page 25



The Gothic Arch in the Garden

Four hatchments are displayed. These are the "achievements" (coats of arms) of a deceased person commonly displayed over the front door when a death and funeral took place and later placed in the church as a memorial. The heraldic descriptions given here are followed by translations into more common terms.

These hatchments portray the arms of:

1. Sir Thomas Samwell, the 1st baronet, who died in 1693 (although the hatchment itself may not be so old.)

Dexter background black.

Argent two squirrels sejant addorsed cracking nuts gules (Samwell),

impaling, Sable a cross of fusils argent over all a bend ermine (Godschalk)

Crest: On a ducal coronet or a squirrel cracking a nut proper.

No mantling. Motto: In coelo quies

On the left-hand side a silver background with two squirrels sitting back to back cracking nuts all in red (Samwell). On the right a black background with a cross of silver diamonds a diagonal stripe of ermine (Godschalk) The crest is a duke's coronet in gold with a squirrel sitting and cracking a nut all in natural colours. The motto translates as "At rest in heaven"

2. Sir Thomas Samwell: the 2nd baronet, who died in 1757 after completing the rebuilding of the Hall with his wife, Mary Clarke.

Dexter background black

Ermine two squirrels sejant addorsed cracking nuts gules, in centre chief the Badge of Ulster (Samwell),

impaling, Azure three escallops or between two flaunches ermine (Clarke)

Crest: On a ducal coronet or a squirrel sejant proper

Mantling: Gules and argent, ending in tasselled cords. No motto

On the left-hand side an ermine background with two squirrels sitting back to back and cracking nuts all in red. The badge of Ulster (a torn off right hand in red) is superimposed (Samwell). On the right, three shells in gold on a blue background, with ermine at the sides (Clarke). The crest is a duke's coronet with a naturally coloured squirrel on it. The mantling (ornamental drapery) is red and silver and has tassels at the ends. There is no motto.

3. Sir Thomas Samwell, the 3rd Baronet, who died in 1779.

All black background

Argent two squirrels sejant addorsed gules (Samwell)

Crest: On a ducal coronet or a squirrel sejant gules

No mantling. Motto: Christus sit regula vitae

A silver background with two red squirrels sitting back to back (Samwell). The crest is a duke's coronet with a red squirrel sitting on top. The motto means "Christ is the rule of life".

4. Elizabeth, the wife of Sir William Samwell, the last baronet. She died in 1789.

Sinister background black

Ermine two squirrels sejant addorsed cracking nuts gules, in sinister chief the Badge of Ulster (Samwell)

impaling, Azure two bars wavy ermine, on a chief argent a demi-lion rampant sable (Smith)

Crest: Within a ducal coronet or a squirrel gules. Motto: Resurgam

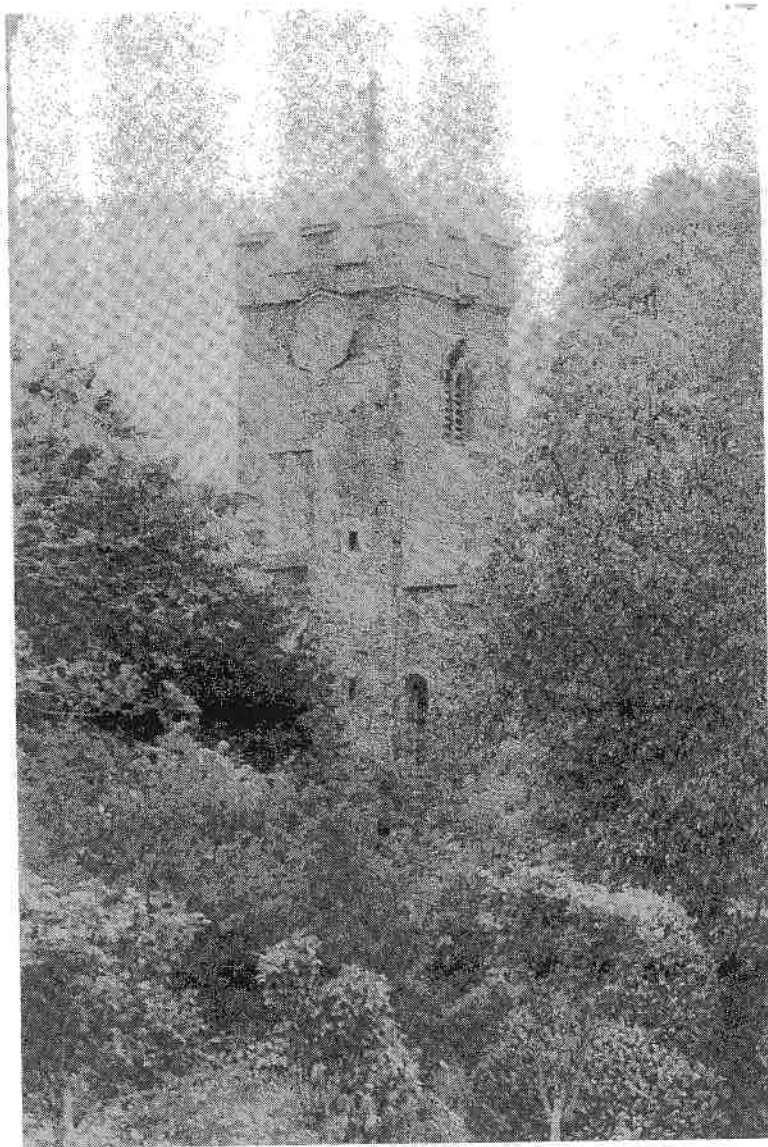
Ermine background, with two squirrels sitting back to back cracking nuts all in red, with the badge of Ulster (the hand) superimposed. On the right a blue background with wavy bars of ermine, the top section has a silver background with half of a rampant black lion (Smith). The crest is the same as number 3. The motto is "I will arise".

(It should be noted that the translations give "left" and "right" as the viewer sees them, but in heraldic terms "dexter" (right) and "sinister" (left) refer to the point of view of the bearer of the shield).

As the church was used until it was declared redundant a few years ago, there are other memorials to more recent parishioners, as well as to other members of the Samwell family.

Although many items were removed when it was declared redundant, the church is an excellent example of a small family church - the clock, for instance, can only be read from the Hall. The tower has been improved recently and can be climbed with the exercise of reasonable care, although members of the school are only allowed to do so under strict supervision and with the permission of the Headmaster. Around the church are some old and interesting graves, but as the local residents still care for and visit the graves any inspection should be undertaken with care and respect. The graveyard is also a conservation area, so the plants and wild life should not be harmed

The School uses the church regularly for its services at Christmas and other religious assemblies and a service is held once a year for the former parish. The School appreciates the opportunity to use this historic building for its proper purpose as well as for historical studies.



The only clock on the Church faces the Hall

UPTON HALL

As has already been mentioned there were many changes and additions to the Hall so it is difficult to trace the exact origins of the building and in the absence of Planning laws and Building Regulations owners did very much as they liked. The best way to appreciate the complications of the structure is to wander around and look carefully at the various styles and additions.

We know that the site was occupied from earliest times and there was a Saxon weaving shed to the west of the church. A mill was mentioned in Domesday, but the Survey does not mention a Saxon Great Hall or the Saxon who owned the site.

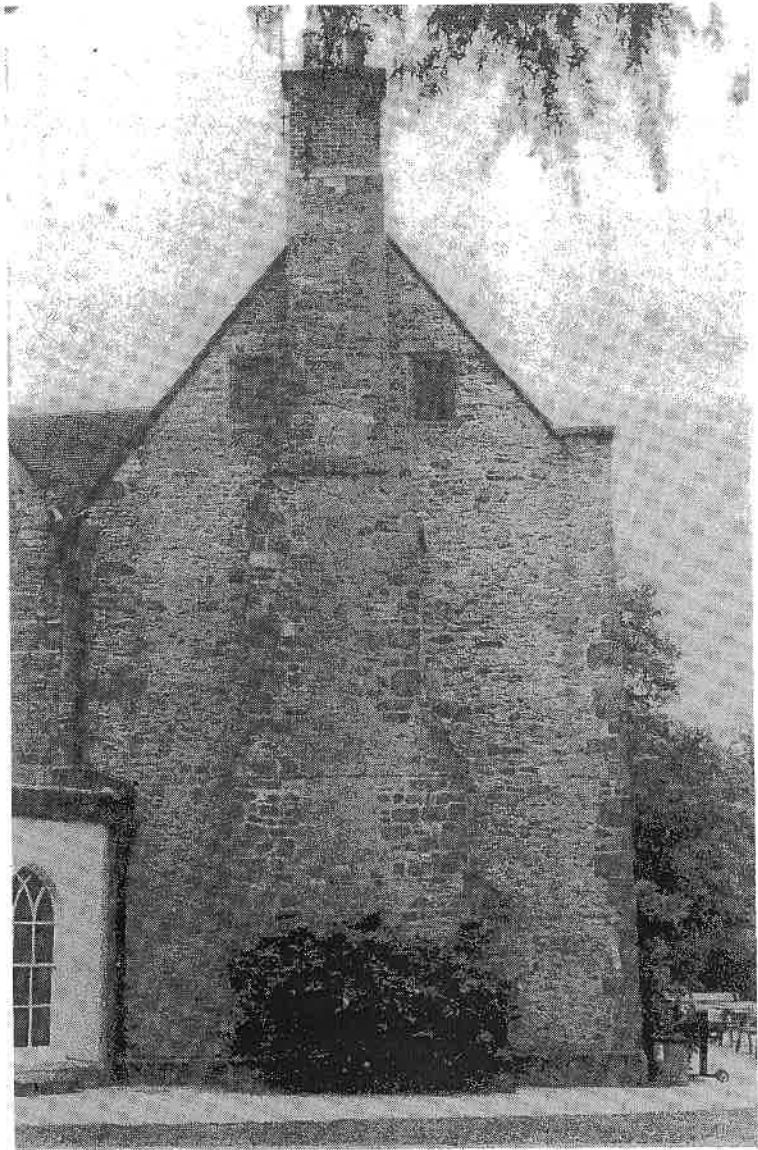
We assume that the Fitzsewins and their successors built a house and Pevsner suggests the present ballroom - "a tall room rising through two storeys which is clearly the original hall of the early house" - was the Great Hall. Pevsner also points to the roof timbers of the ball room and the way they have been altered as showing evidence of earlier construction. On the other hand, a specialist in ancient buildings recently visited the school and was of the opinion that the oldest part of the house is on the south front with the so-called "monk's room" having been the solar (usually an upper room which was the owner's private chamber) of the Medieval manor house.



The South Front

Examination of the interior does seem to confirm this as the "monk's room" is obviously detached from the main buildings and of older construction in lath and plaster.

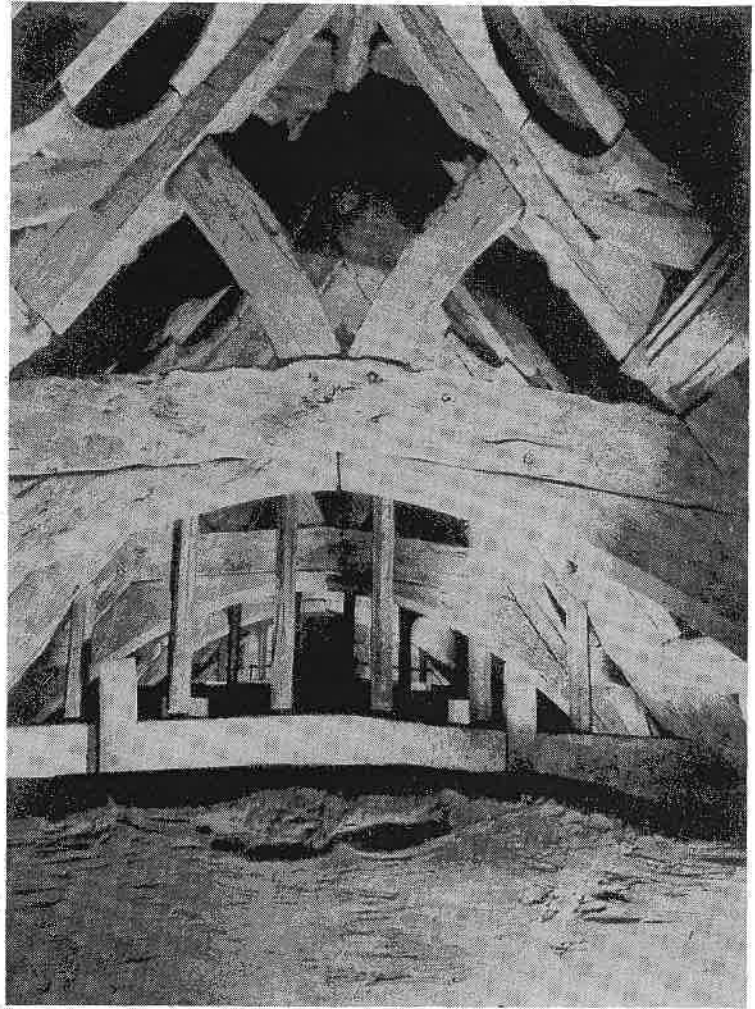
Part of the west front. Possibly this is what remains of the Medieval Great Hall and Solar. The small windows at the top are those of the "Monks' Room".



The present school dining room, showing the stone arches, bread oven and the Victorian cooking ranges. This may be part of the original kitchen which was detached from the main building.

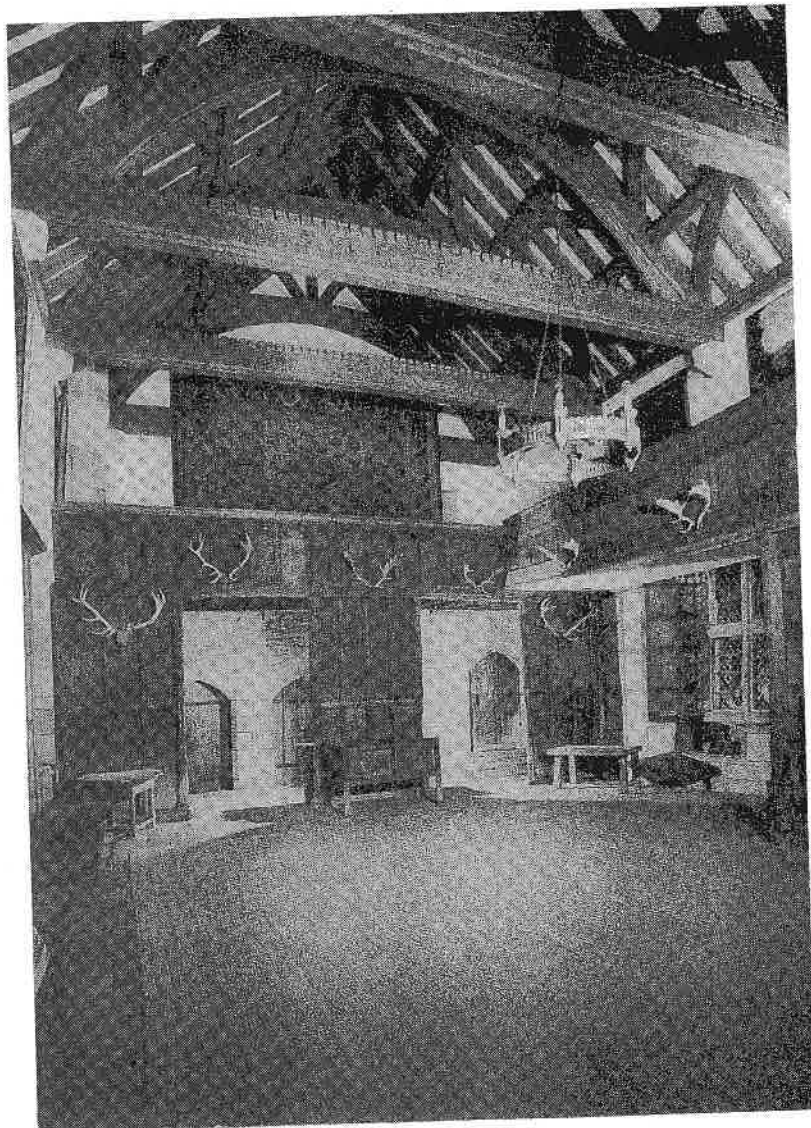


Dendrochronological tests in 1986 dated the chestnut roof timbers to 1507, making them late medieval, and probably erected at the time of the Knightleys. Certainly their beauty suggests the ballroom was originally open to the roof and acted as the Great Hall of the Tudor house. The present school dining room also shows early construction and this suggests a separate kitchen block, detached from the main house for safety, an arrangement which was common in manor houses.



The house the Knightleys built is difficult to trace although Baker, writing in the time of the last Samwell owner in about 1820 says "the oldest part of the house is of stone" and Pevsner suggests that the south wing, including the changes to the roof, were the work of the early 17th century before the main 18th century redesign. Much of the main part of the house seems to be either 17th century or Georgian. Baker records that "the father of the late Sir Thomas Samwell (who would have been the 2nd baronet) rebuilt the east or principal front of brick, to which he added a wing containing several good rooms which are unoccupied; and the south-west side (which would have been the garden frontage overlooking the lake) was taken down a few years since and modernised by the present owner". This last adaptation might well have been the one which added the front stair and so isolated the "monk's room" (or Medieval solar or "Gallery room" as Pevsner calls it) , which can now be reached only through the roof space. This is a handsome room and it seems strange that it is so inaccessible. Baker thus puts the first major reconstruction in the first half of the 18th century, which fits in with the ballroom and Georgian Gothic room used by the school as a library, as well as the drawing rooms now used by the school as offices.

The Great Hall at Haddon Hall in Derbyshire was reconstructed by the Duke of Rutland in the 1920s to reproduce the Medieval design. Its dimensions and the roof timbers strongly resemble those at Upton. This picture gives an impression of the possible appearance of the Great Hall as constructed by the Knightleys in early Tudor days before the present Ballroom was created.

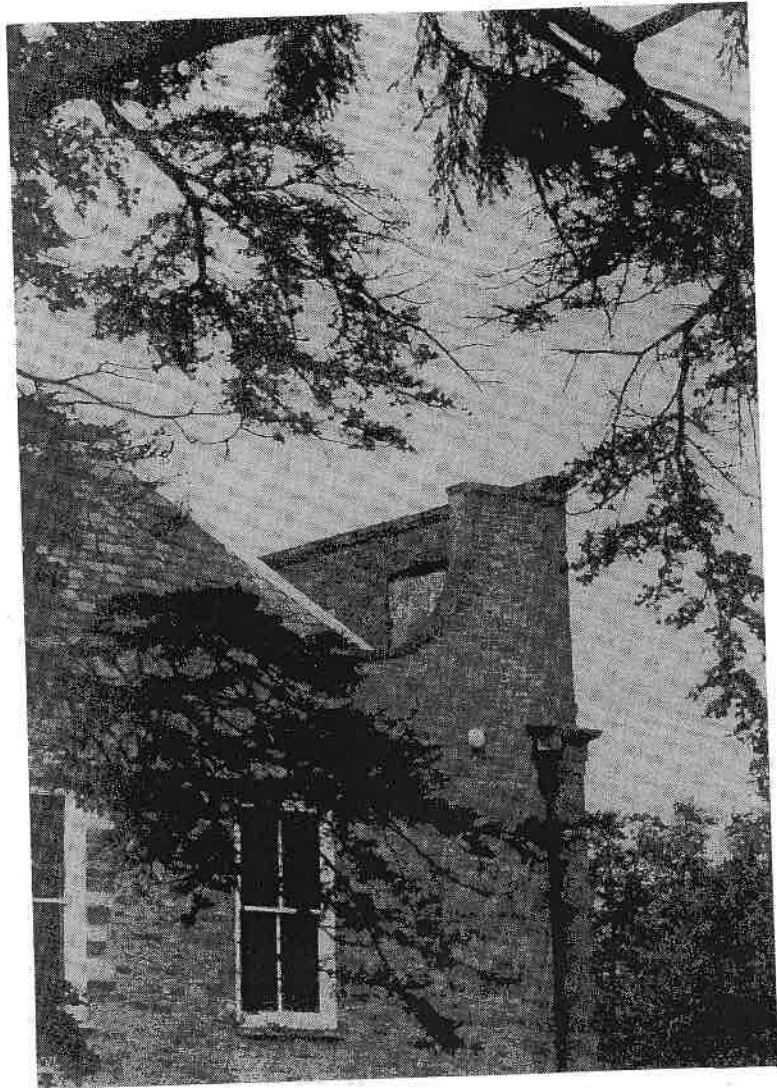


The next great changes were in the early 19th century and may have included the rooms on the north side, now used as laboratories. Much of this must be guesswork from looking at the use of building materials and styles of decoration. I have not been able to find any plans of the building works.

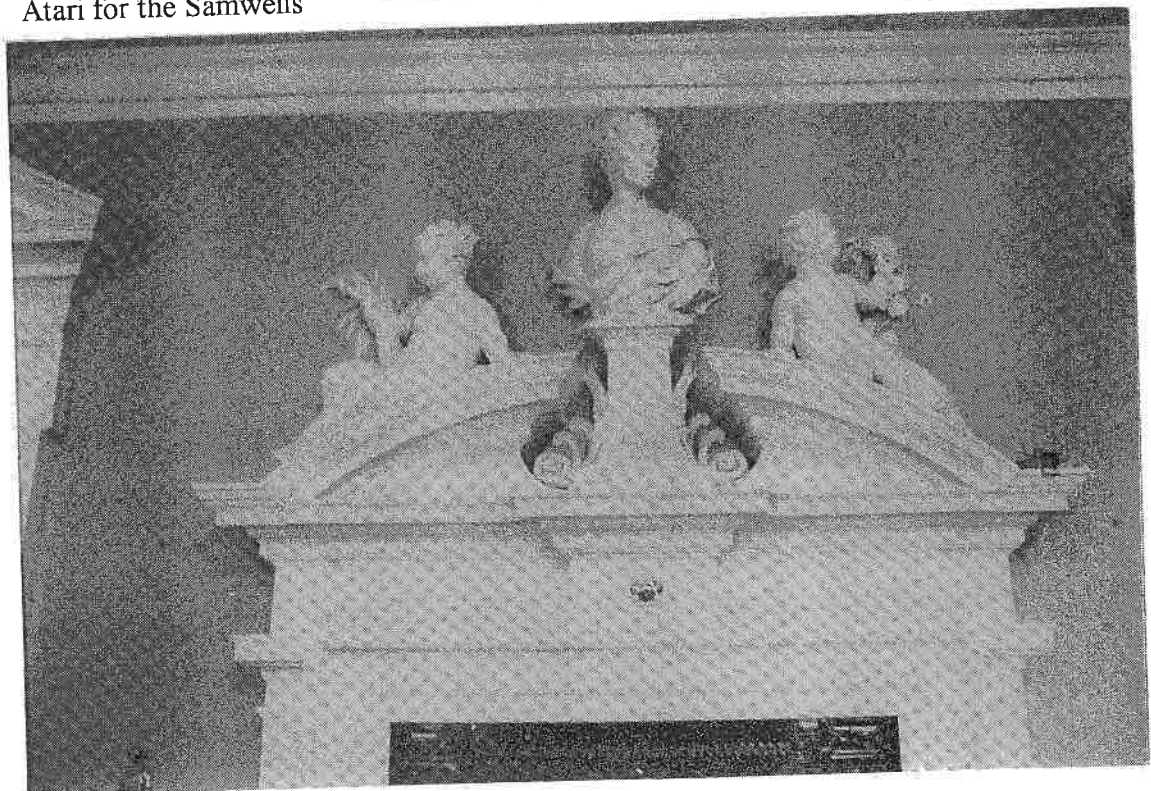
The most impressive features of the present house are the rooms remodelled by the second baronet who lived from 1693 to 1757 and his second wife, Mary Clarke. The public rooms at the front including the present school offices and the ballroom received most attention, but other rooms preserve interesting features. There seems to have been plenty of money for these improvements. In the ballroom, the stucco is reported to be some of the best in England. It is reputedly the work of Giuseppe Atari and his partner, Giovanni Bagutti, who both worked for famous architects like John Gibbs. Their work can be seen in many famous buildings, including the Senate House in Cambridge, St Martin-in-the-Fields in London, Ragley Hall and Castle Howard. The statue of Apollo is signed by Atari and certainly the stucco on the walls and ceiling is most attractive. Sir Thomas and his wife were lavish with their emblems and the Samwell squirrels and the Clarke scallop shells are everywhere. They also have their initials intertwined over the main door of the ballroom.

Many of the original portraits installed to fit the new room have survived. Most of them are of Samwells, as might be expected, but the family of Viscount Wenman is also well represented as one of his daughters and heiresses married Richard Samwell. Her portrait and those of her two sisters hang in the Hall. Baker attributes these portraits to Sir Peter Lely, but modern art opinion suggests they are more likely to be by Simon Verelst or his "circle". Diagrams of the walls of the Ballroom with the pictures, where they can be identified, are included here. Baker has a list of pictures in the building, with some very ambitious attributions, including Sir Peter Lely and even Van Dyke. Only those in the Ballroom survive from that list. In 1994 the pictures were valued for Northampton Borough Council, the School's landlords, by Philips, the London firm of Fine Art Auctioneers and Valuers. Most of their attributions were tentative, but they credited the pictures to the "schools" of late 17th and early 18th English portrait painters like John Riley and Simon Verelst. Copies of their opinion are available at the school. The pictures are now thought to be of considerable value.

The back of the facade showing the false third storey added by the Samwells to improve the proportions and the appearance of the main frontage.



Part of the decorative plasterwork in the Ballroom created by Atari for the Samwells



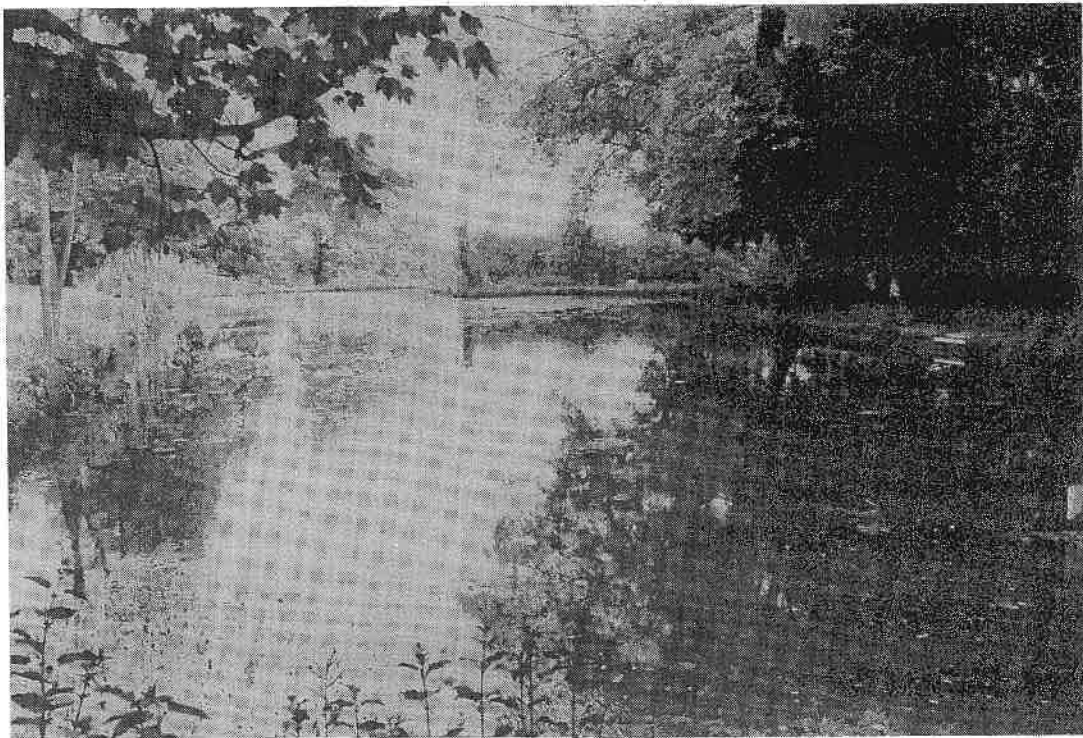


The deserted village with the garden remains circled

THE GARDENS AND THE PARK

There is some mystery about the origins of the gardens at the Hall. Possibly the Knightleys emparked as they cleared the village, as was popular with the new style of building in Tudor times and introduced deer into the park, but that is not recorded. We do know that the present park and gardens were laid out by the Samwells in the 18th century. There are, however, remains of a terraced garden from the earlier time laid out away from the present house, south of the end of the present driveway. This area is indicated on the map opposite by a circle.

Perhaps this was intended as part of the site of the Tudor house, but it seems a long way from the building and there is no trace discoverable of another house in that position. The existing gardens were laid out in the 18th century, employing the attractive fall of ground south of the house towards the River Nene. The work is attributed to Thomas White and he used water from the stream feeding the Medieval fish ponds to create lakes. The remains of the fish ponds (which are shown on the plan on page 10) can be traced with some difficulty to the west of the gardens but White's lake is still a major feature of the grounds.



View of the lake

White also planted trees, but unfortunately age has taken the two magnificent copper beeches which many people can remember gracing the lawns, and Dutch Elm disease

But the ghost was laid, it was heard no more, for in the morning the white peacock was found dead on the road.

There is another story of the ghost. An Upton friend wrote to me in 1909: "When you come this way notice that the first mile-iron (I do not like to say milestone) beyond the Red House has its top broken off. It is accepted here that the damage was done by a man thinking in the darkness that it was the Upton ghost, and shooting it. His name was Moore that shot the mile-post, and woe to the man who alluded to ghost or milestone in his presence. He has long gone to the land of ghosts himself."

These stories are humorous and true. There is another far more weird, and true or not, is a late instance of the lingering belief in witchcraft. About the year 1850, it is related, there lived at Upton a disagreeable old woman popularly accounted a witch. Such few neighbours as there were shunned her, for her powers were feared. It was believed that she transformed herself at night into a black cat, and prowled about the place wreaking vengeance on her enemies.

Now it so happened that the honest miller at Upton Mill was annoyed at having his nights disturbed by his dog's incessant barking and his fowls' evident alarm. Often a black cat stole about the yard thus causing the commotion. The miller determined to settle that cat. He waited for her with a stick in one hand and the collar of his terrier in the other.

The cat appeared, the miller struck her with his stick evidently damaging one of her forefeet, and the dog in the instant bowled her over. For all that the cat made good her escape.

The next morning the witch had a broken arm and scarred face: she had done the damage, she explained, by falling over the doorstep!

IN RECENT TIMES

Once the Hall passed out of the hands of the Samwell family its history is difficult to unravel. There was a disputed succession and the last Samwell owner died in 1841. A gazetteer of Northamptonshire of 1849 shows the owners to be a Miss Drought and Sir Henry Fairfax. Miss Drought was residing at the Hall with her steward according to the population returns.

The estate was sold to Mr George Turner "one of the great shoe manufacturers of Northampton" and he lived there until his death in 1892. The estate was much reduced by then as the northern part had been sold to establish the St Crispin's "lunatic asylum" on the outskirts of Northampton, a great reform of the ways of dealing with mental illness. Mr Turner was an important person locally, being Mayor of Northampton and a JP. His widow died in 1893.

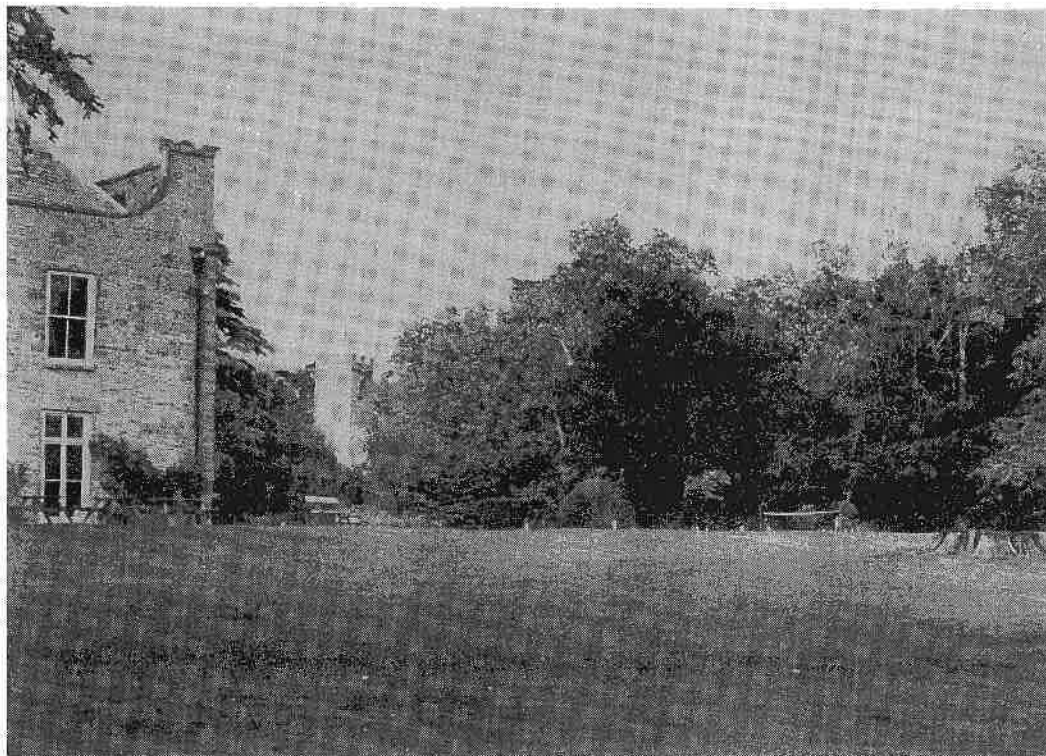
There is an imposing family grave in the churchyard at St Michael's with family burials up to the early years of this century.

Mr William Hudson, a rich Manchester merchant, bought the estate and he set about many improvements to the buildings and the estate. He died in 1916 and Mrs Hudson lived on at the Hall with her brother James. She died in 1935 and her brother in 1946 and the whole estate was sold up. There are Hudson graves in the churchyard.

No family was prepared to take on such a big house in the post-war period. Upton Hall School opened in 1946 and so there has now been a school on the site for fifty years. In 1966 Miss Kathleen Madden leased the buildings for the newly-named Quinton House School; she improved the interior of the Hall and the school flourished, outgrowing the Hall itself so that the stable block, known as "The Lindens" was brought into use. The Northampton Development Corporation took over the ownership as part of its plans for the growth of Northampton New Town. The Hall and stable block were re-roofed in 1986, when Northampton Borough Council became the owners. Other improvements were carried out, especially to the roof area, and it is now possible to cross above the Ballroom and reach the "monks' room" in safety.

In 1988 Mr and Mrs Griffiths became partners in the School with Mr and Mrs Hoskisson who had acquired the school from Miss Madden in the mid-1970s. They

decided to move the Schools around, with the Seniors in the Hall and the Junior School separated in The Lindens. Many other developments and improvements in the buildings have taken place, for instance the rediscovery of the ancient kitchen and the Victorian cooking ranges, and work continues to restore the interior. We all appreciate the value of working in such historic and attractive surroundings.



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There are also available, (but not consulted for this book) some records of the family at the Northamptonshire County Record Office in their original form, and some records of Wenman's military service in the army records. Northampton Borough Council, the present landlords, will have modern records of the building.

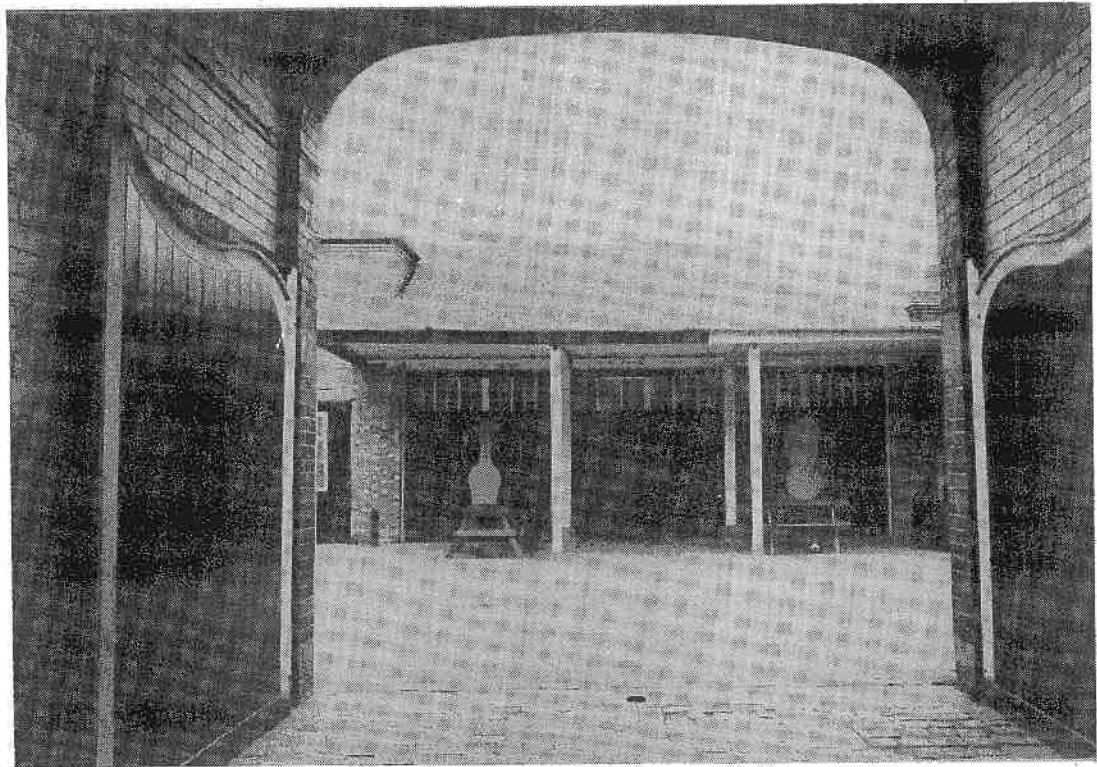
What is now the gymnasium used to be the Coach-house. Coaches were driven through the archway into the courtyard and the sliding doors which still exist in the gymnasium made access easy.

The horses were stabled and cared for all round the courtyard area and the drainage gutters can still be seen.

The estate office was a rather grandly-fitted room next to the Coach-house and many of its original impressive fixtures are still there. This was probably used for administration of the estate and for rent collection.

The area was used more recently for the garaging and care of motor cars and for staff accommodation. In the early years of Quinton House School senior boarders were housed in the coachmen's quarters and behind the coach-house is the original gardener's cottage.

The stables are listed buildings and the surrounding landscaping is protected.



Looking into the courtyard through the entrance archway

STORIES OF GHOSTS AND WITCHCRAFT

There are several stories of strange events and of ghosts. One of the favourites in the school is of the "blue lady" who is supposed to appear in the Ballroom. The story concerns the two wives of the Sir Thomas who carried out the reconstruction in the 18th century, and whose pictures hang on either side of the fireplace. Dame Millicent, the first wife, is said to have been pushed by the second wife, Mary Clarke, to her death from the gallery in the Ballroom. I have yet to see the ghost of a lady of any colour and it is sad to have to say that neither the Ballroom in its present state nor the gallery were built until Millicent was long dead and Mary Clarke's money was probably used towards the building.

These stories are fun and a selection of them appeared in "The Northampton County Magazine" in 1931

There used to be a general belief among the young people of Northampton that there was a real ghost at Upton. It was frequently to be seen near the church where the high wall and over-hanging trees shadowed the main road. Its penchant was snatching off hats and caps of those riding by. In the days when children in Sunday School treats were taken for a ride in waggons, on the journey home from Harpole it was always the rule for the boys to put their caps in their pockets when passing Upton.

An old inhabitant many years ago said that there had been no ghost at Upton since about the year 1830 when "a drover killed it". The Samwells had a white peacock which was in the habit of roosting in the boughs of the trees over the road, and when a person or horse passed in the night it would generally scream in apparent alarm. People heard the noise and could sometimes dimly see the white figure.

One night a drover was startled when the bird screamed. Looking up he saw some object, white and formless, apparently moving.

"Ghost or no ghost," he said, "I'll have a shy at you!"

His aim was good, something heavy fell almost at his feet and he scampered off.